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Poland: The party's younger members and its less doctrinaire elements may be making a bid for power behind the leadership of provincial party boss Gierek.

These elements have been waiting for the older generation to make room for them and have a particular interest in domestic reforms. Recent, scattered press criticism of party rigidity, administrative inefficiency, and avoidance of responsibility reflect their views. They appear to reject the extremism of the current anti-Semitic campaign conducted by the hard-line elements in the party. In the short run, however, they may try to exploit it in an effort to loosen the grip of Gomulka's stagnant leadership.

In his second major speech since the crisis began, Gierek on 30 March separated himself from the terroristic aspects of the regime's reaction to student demonstrations, and cautiously outlined reforms which would appeal to the young. Gierek also rejected coercion as a means of solving problems and omitted "Zionists" from his list of Poland's political opponents. In order to reassure Moscow of his good intentions, he strongly supported the Polish-Soviet alliance.

Gierek's group appears to be in competition with the party's hardliners led by Interior Minister Moczar and politburo member Strzelecki. Both groups probably view the present purge as useful to their efforts to gain control of the party. Both groups also seem to be using Gomulka's name for their own ends, hoping to garner the political benefits of Gomulka's residual prestige among the party rank and file.

Their ultimate goals, however, are different. Moczar's aim appears to be maintenance of a doctrinaire, chauvinistic regime based on naked use of power. Gierek's reputation as a tough but pragmatic administrator and his most recent speech suggest that his group is seeking more imaginative domestic policies, based at least in part on popular support.

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Though shorn of absolute power, Gomulka probably is attempting to reassert his authority. If that proves impossible he would probably try to bring about a compromise. Failing this, Gomulka probably would throw his support to one or the other contending groups, neither of whom share his exact views on how Poland should be run. [REDACTED]

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NOTES

Czechoslovakia: The Czechoslovak Government probably will resign en masse today. This will clear the way for an early session of the National Assembly, which is expected to deal with the central committee's recommendations on government reorganization and replacement of the present ministers. The assembly probably will also reform itself, purging its leadership of former president Novotny's cronies. Later in the session it probably will begin consideration of Dubcek's action program. [REDACTED]

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Communist China - USSR: On 4 April the Soviet tanker Komsomolets Ukrainy and its crew, under detention near Canton since 26 March, left Chinese waters under armed escort. A Chinese Foreign Ministry note, which announced the release of the ship, countered earlier Soviet protests by charging that the Soviet ship had "openly resisted" the arrest of one of its crewmen engaged in "espionage." The reasonably rapid Chinese response to the Soviet protests suggests that the incident was initiated by overzealous local elements and was not dictated by central authorities in Peking. [REDACTED]

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Southern Yemen: The army command is reportedly not pleased with President Qahtan al-Shaabi, whose recent speeches have been hostile to the army and have favored the extreme revolutionaries. The army, however, has so far failed to take action. The situation remains uneasy, and both government ministers and army officers are said to be keeping submachine guns on their desks. Aden's economy is slumping, and the token short-term subsidies which the British are willing to continue will not relieve the economic malaise.

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Panama: National Union leader Arnulfo Arias, thwarted in his legal attack on the Robles government, may now attempt a last-ditch effort to win the presidential elections on 12 May. Shortly before the Supreme Court's ruling against the National Assembly's conviction of Robles, Arias said he was discussing aid from leftist elements to "fight the National Guard and if necessary the US, which was supporting the Guard." A demonstration scheduled today at Arias party headquarters could result in a confrontation with the Guard, which has not been challenged since the outbreak of rioting on 28 March.

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*Ecuador: Security officials in the key port city of Guayaquil expect violence at a rally today for presidential candidate Camilo Ponce. If there is violence, Ponce supporters may retaliate in Quito against his chief rival, Jose Maria Velasco, who is campaigning there. Violence, customary to Ecuadorean elections, has already caused several deaths, and more trouble is expected as the general election of 2 June draws nearer.

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